

**To:** Trulove, Whitney[Trulove.Whitney@epa.gov]  
**From:** Smith, Paula  
**Sent:** Sun 8/9/2015 4:13:09 AM  
**Subject:** Re: draft internal comm

Looks great! Will send you the latest statement we issued tonight. Also the 1 million gallons has potentially increased to 3M now. Should get confirmation tomorrow. Thx so much Whitney. This will mean a lot to folks working the project. -P

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 8, 2015, at 9:29 PM, Trulove, Whitney <[Trulove.Whitney@epa.gov](mailto:Trulove.Whitney@epa.gov)> wrote:

How is this for starters? I'm sure there will be new developments to share come Monday so I left a placeholder....

By now you have likely heard of the Gold King Mine release that occurred on August 5, 2015. EPA was conducting an investigation of the mine to assess the on-going water releases from the mine, to treat the mine water and to assess the feasibility of further mine remediation. The plan was to excavate the loose material that had collapsed into the cave entry back to the timbering. During the excavation, the loose material gave way, opening the adit (mine tunnel) and spilling the water stored behind the collapsed material into Cement Creek, a tributary of the Animas River.

Initial estimates are that the release contained approximately one million gallons of water (estimated from the dimensions of the mine adit) that was held behind unconsolidated debris near an abandoned mine portal. There were several workers at the site at the time of the breach, all were unharmed.

The large pulse of water dissipated in about an hour although the adit continued to discharge lower flows into Cement Creek. EPA has rebuilt settling ponds to capture and treat the water with caustic soda and flocculent.

EPA has been coordinating with ATSDR in response to public health concerns/questions associated with the mine waste plume. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Colorado Division of Wildlife are assessing impacts to wildlife.

Region 8 has also been coordinating with Region 6 and Region 9 and the states of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and the Southern Ute Tribe. Potentially impacted water systems have been notified and precautions are in place to ensure drinking water in homes is protected.

EPA has had 40 (?) staff working round-the-clock on the response. RA Shaun McGrath and David Ostrander spoke at a public meeting in Durango on August 7<sup>th</sup>. The incident is drawing widespread media coverage.

As of Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup>.....

EPA has created a website with Qs & As ([link here](#)). If you get any calls regarding this incident, please refer them to ??? Public health questions/concerns should be directed to Chris Poulet, ATSDR/R8 at 303-312-7013.

Thanks - Whitney

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Whitney Trulove

EPA Region 8, Denver

Office of Communications & Public Involvement

Phone: 303-312-6099

**From:** Smith, Paula

**Sent:** Saturday, August 08, 2015 5:57 PM

**To:** Trulove, Whitney

**Subject:** Sorry for the delay

Attached is the desk statement providing facts for the entire project. I would maybe just use the first paragraph to explain what happened. Then,

Over 40 EPA folks and our contractors here in the region and on-the-ground in Durango, Silverton, NM, and with the Navajo Nation and Southern Ute are working round the clock to support the clean-up effort. And we'll try to get a bit more detail for you on who's out there from here- including, Libby, Cynthia, Hays Griswald, Dan Hall, from Region 8. Can be brief but just want to recognize all the hard work and coordination across R8 with with R6 and R9.

**- Paula**